

Sex Offenses

Sex offenses refers to six crimes of a sexual nature: prostitution and solicitation, indecent assault, indecent exposure, peeping & spying, annoying & accosting, and obscene telephone calls. Rape is not included because it is a Part I crime.

Crime	2000	2001
Prostitution & Solicitation	2	0
Indecent Assault	26	22
Indecent Exposure	36	21
Peeping & Spying	16	9
Annoying & Accosting	27	16
Obscene Phone Calls	28	10

Prostitution and Solicitation

Prostitution is most commonly associated with “streetwalking”—that is, prostitutes working the streets and corners, looking for clients to pick them up in cars. This type of prostitution has long been considered a sign of urban decay and social disorganization. Consequently, the Cambridge Police Department’s Special Investigations Unit has aggressively targeted both “streetwalkers” and “johns” (the streetwalkers’ clients) over the past decade with seasonal stings. Their efforts have nearly eradicated the presence of visible streetwalking in the city of Cambridge, evidenced by the continuing decline.

Less visible, but no less serious, is the type of prostitution that involves high-class escort services, health clubs, or massage parlors fronting for prostitution rings. The Special Investigation Unit did not make an arrest for prostitution in Cambridge during 2001.

Indecent Assault

Indecent assault involves the unwanted touching of one person by another in a private area or with sexual overtones. In about 50% of incidents, the offender and victim know each other. Incidents that show that the offender attempted or intended to rape the victim are counted as rapes, not as indecent assaults. In addition, any force or injury would change the type of crime to aggravated assault rather than indecent assault.

Indecent assault totals tend to fluctuate. This year’s total is slightly lower than last year’s total. Most of the acquaintance incidents involve employees who were harassed by their employers or co-workers and young girls assaulted by older males. Many incidents involved females being approached from behind and grabbed on the buttocks. This is the most common

form of “blitz” style indecent assault, although no real patterns developed this year.

Indecent Exposure

Indecent exposure has decreased significantly down from 50 in 1999 to 36 in 2000 and in 2001 only 21 incidents of this type were recorded. Vagrants relieving themselves in public account for 25% of the arrests for this crime in a typical year. The severely inebriated account for 30 to 40 percent of the suspects who lose control of their inhibitions in public.

In 2001, there were four incidents that were categorized as professional flashings. As in other years, a high percentage of these incidents were clustered in Area 4 and MIT in the vicinity of Kendal Square. Four individuals were arrested for this variation of exposure this year.

Peeping & Spying

Peeping and spying offenders peer through the windows of houses or apartments, generally at night. Most of the incidents of 2000 seem unrelated except for a few incidents in the Peabody and Agassiz neighborhoods that match a pattern that originally emerged in the fall of 1998.

In the fall of 1998, an unusual pattern of peeping & spying emerged. It involved the usual scenario of an offender peering through the windows of houses and apartments, except the offender was male and so were his victims. A suspect was identified, but was never arrested. This year, two similar incidents were reported in this area. In both cases, the male victim heard a noise outside, looked, and saw a male suspect outside masturbating.

There has never been an arrest in the Peabody / Agassiz pattern and the case remains under investigation. There were no discernible peeping and spying patterns identified in Cambridge in 2001. And since the aforementioned pattern has abated, the number of incidents of this crime has fallen from a high of 31 in 1999, to a low of 9 incidents reported in 2001.